WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of establishing a computer-based communication session involving a user of a computer, said method comprising:

receiving from the user notification of a desired participant in the communication session and a desired communications application to be used for the session;

retrieving a participant identifier effective to identify the desired participant to the desired communications application; and

providing the retrieved participant identifier to the communications application.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said receiving comprises detecting selection of an icon within a graphical user interface displayed using the computer.

3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said receiving further comprises detecting selection of a first displayed icon, and movement of the first icon to the position of a second displayed icon.

4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein one of the first and second icons represents the desired participant and the other represents the desired communications application.

5. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein one of the first and second icons represents a previously-established communications session with the desired participant using a different communications application, and the other represents the desired communications application.

6. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein one of the first and second icons represents a group of desired participants and the other represents the desired communications application.

7. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said retrieving comprises accessing a data structure storing the participant identifier.

8. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein said receiving comprises receiving required participant permission or role information, and wherein said retrieving further comprises verifying participant or role information stored in the data structure.

9. The method as recited in claim 2, further comprising displaying, on a display screen of the computer, a graphical user interface including representations of multiple communications applications accessible with the computer and representations of multiple potential participants in a communications session.

10. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein said representations of multiple communications applications and said representations of multiple potential participants comprise respective icons.

11. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising retrieving a user identifier appropriate to identify the user to the desired communications application.

12. The method as recited in claim 11, further comprising retrieving a password effective to allow access of the user to the desired communications application.

13. A system for computer-based communications, comprising:

means for receiving, from a user of a computer, notification of a desired participant in a communications session and a desired communications application for the communications session;

means for retrieving a participant identifier appropriate to identify the desired participant to the desired communications application; and

means for providing the retrieved participant identifier to the communications application.

14. The system as recited in claim 13, wherein said means for receiving, means for retrieving and means for providing comprise a communications aggregation program stored on a storage medium within the system.

15. The system as recited in claim 14, wherein the storage medium is within or accessible by the computer.

16. The system as recited in claim 14, wherein the storage medium is within or accessible by an additional computer.

17. The system as recited in claim 14, wherein the communications aggregation program is adapted to access a data structure including the participant identifier.

18. The system as recited in claim 17, wherein the data structure is stored on or accessible by an additional computer.

19. The system as recited in claim 14, wherein the communications aggregation program is further adapted to display on a display screen of the computer a graphical user interface including representations of multiple communications applications accessible using the computer and of multiple potential participants in a communications session.

20. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein said representations comprise icons, and wherein the communications aggregation program is adapted to detect a combined selection of a first icon representing a desired communications application and a second icon representing a desired participant.

21. The system as recited in claim 13, further comprising means for retrieving a user identifier appropriate to identify the user to the desired communications application.

22. A computer-usable carrier medium, comprising:

first program instructions executable on a computer for receiving, from a first participant, notification of a desired additional participant in a communication session and a desired communications application for use in the session;

second program instructions executable on the computer for retrieving a participant identifier appropriate to identify the desired additional participant to the desired communications application; and

third program instructions executable on the computer for providing the retrieved participant identifier to the communications application.

23. The carrier medium as recited in claim 22, wherein the first, second and third program instructions are within a communications aggregation program stored on the carrier medium.

24. The carrier medium as recited in claim 20, further comprising fourth program instructions executable on the computer for displaying, on a display screen of a first computer used by the first participant, a graphical user interface including representations of multiple communications applications accessible with the computer and of multiple potential participants in the communications session.

25. The carrier medium as recited in claim 24, wherein the first computer is the same as the computer on which the program instructions are executable.

26. The carrier medium as recited in claim 22, further comprising fourth program instructions executable on the computer for retrieving a first participant identifier appropriate to identify the first participant to the desired communications application.

27. A computer-usable carrier medium, comprising a data structure storing multiple sets of participant identifiers, each effective to identify a potential participant in a computer-based communications session to each of multiple communications applications available for use in the communications session.

28. The carrier medium as recited in claim 27, wherein the data structure further stores role or permission information corresponding to each potential participant.

29. The carrier medium as recited in claim 27, wherein the data structure comprises an object or class in an object-based programming approach, and each set of participant identifiers is within a respective additional object.

30. A method of establishing a computer-based communication session involving a user of a computer, said method comprising:

displaying, on a display screen of the computer, a graphical user interface including representations of multiple communications applications accessible with computer and representations of multiple potential participants in a communications session;

receiving from the user notification of a desired participant in the communication session and a desired communications application to be used for the session;

retrieving a participant identifier effective to identify the desired participant to the desired communications application; and

providing the retrieved participant identifier to the communications application.

31. The method as recited in claim 30, wherein said receiving comprises detecting selection of an icon within the graphical user interface.

32. The method as recited in claim 31, wherein said representations of multiple communications applications and said representations of multiple potential participants comprise respective icons

33. The method as recited in claim 31, wherein said receiving further comprises detecting selection of a first displayed icon, and movement of the first icon to the position of a second displayed icon